

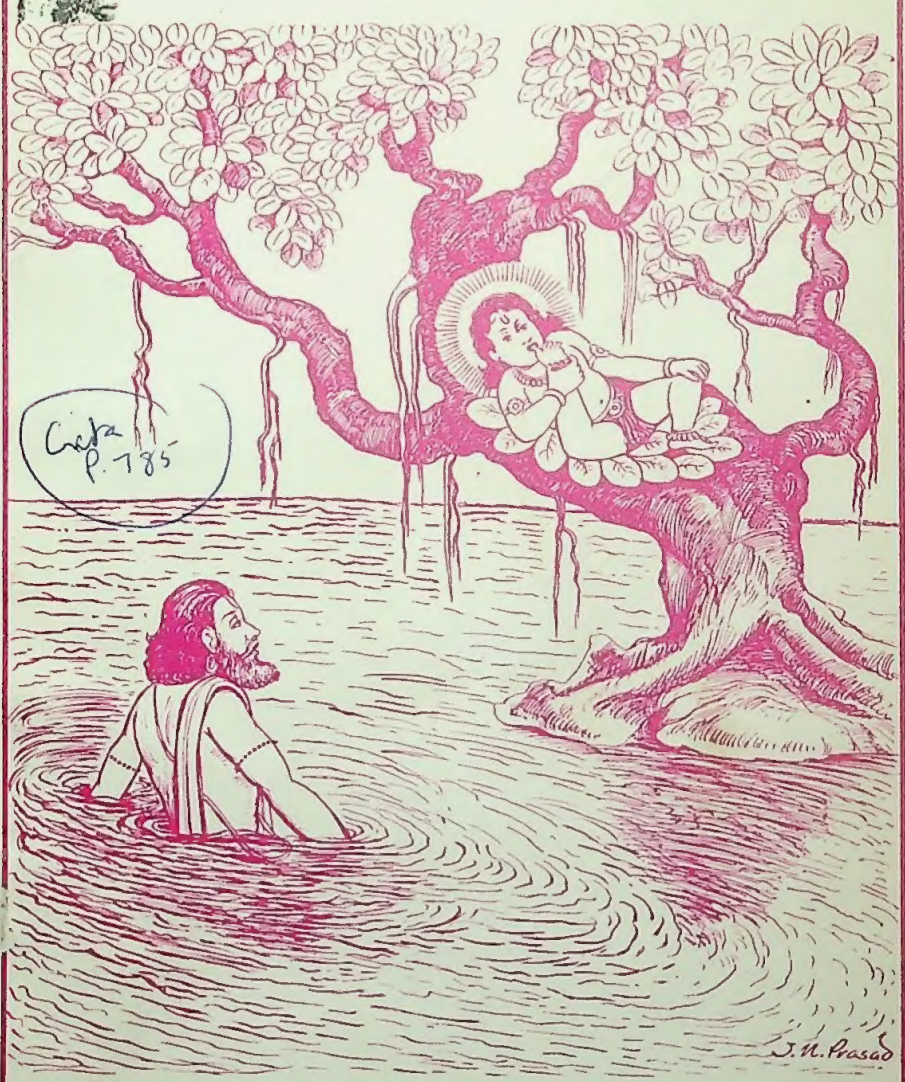
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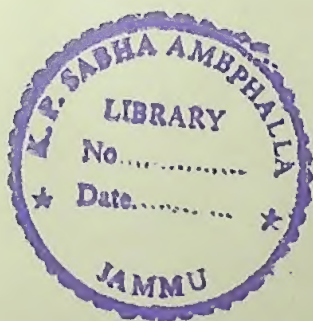
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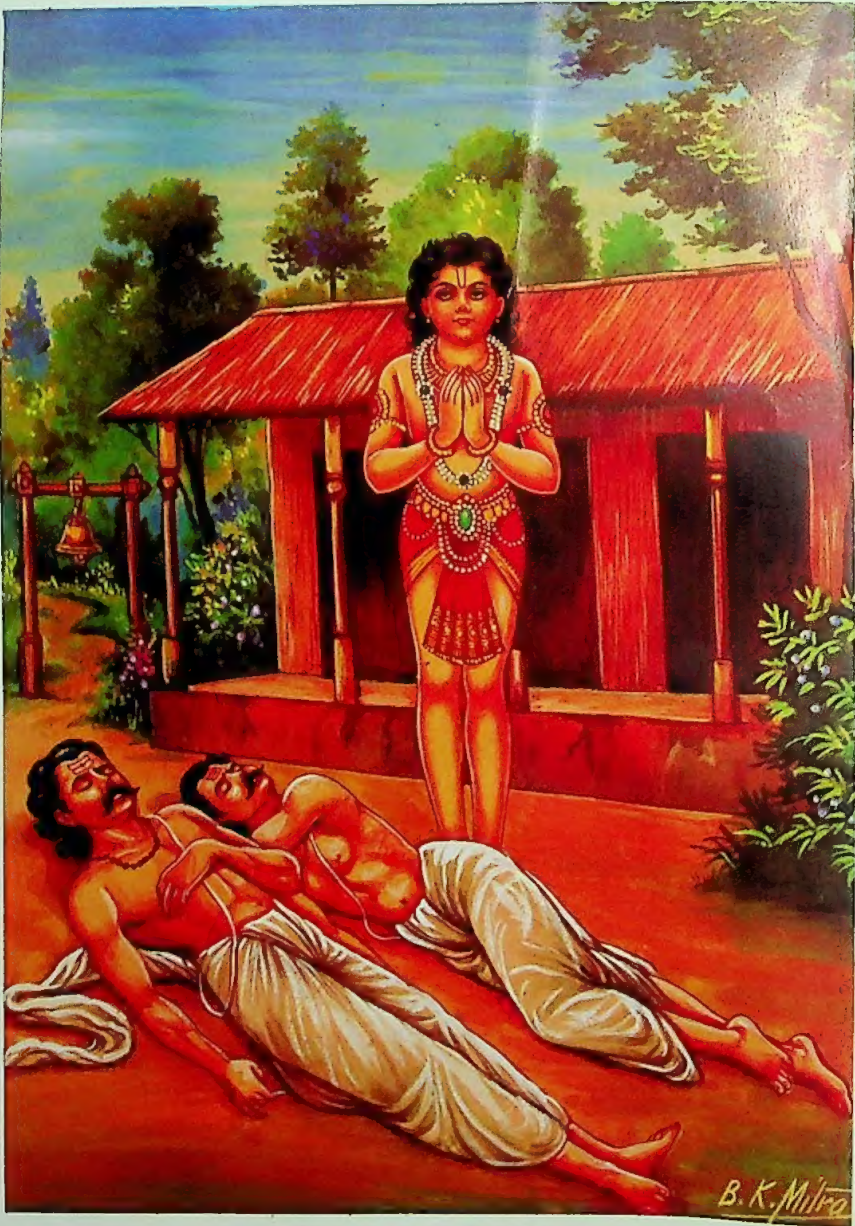
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The forgiving Prahlāda

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR
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A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL
IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

New Series

May 1998

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Vol. XLIII

तस्मात् पिता मे पूयेत दुरन्ताद् दुस्तरादधात् ।
पूतस्तेऽपाङ्गसंदृष्टदा कृपणवत्सल ॥

"He, my father, may (kindly) be absolved from that sin, which is so difficult to get rid of and so difficult to cross over, although (I am sure) he was purged (of it) the moment he was compassionately regarded with the outer corner of Your eye, O lover of the afflicted."

(Bhāgavata VII. 10.17)



Glory of the Devotees

—Late Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

Devotees of God are identical with Him. Their mind and intellect are merged in the Lord, and through these alone do the senses etc., function. The thoughts and actions too of the devotees should, therefore, be regarded as the sport of God Himself. Just as the Lord's abodes and the scenes of His diverse sports are held in reverence as centres of pilgrimage, even so the homes of the devotees and centres of their activity are transformed into so many sacred places. In the words of the venerable Tulasīdāsa, "Saints or devotees are the very embodiments of joy and blessings; they are verily the holy Prayaga, the chief of all holy places, though not rooted in one place."

Just as aspirants attain liberation by meditating on God, so do they become eligible for blessedness by contemplating on the lives and attainments of devotees like Yudhiṣṭhira, Prahlāda, Śukadeva, Bharata, Hanumān and so on. This is borne out by Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa who says at the end of *Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa* of his *Rāmacaritamānasa*—

"Those who listen regularly and reverently to the story of Bharata, will surely attain devotion to the lotus-feet of Śrī Rāma and Sītā and develop a distaste for the enjoyments of the world."

The activities and writings etc., of holy men tend towards the redemption of the people. Their very birth is intended for establishing righteousness on a firm footing. The Lord manifests Himself on this earth only rarely when

unrighteousness gets so rampant that the destruction of evil-doers becomes unavoidable; the devotees, however, are available in almost every age. That is why they have been exalted to a higher position than God himself. "In my opinion," says Tulasīdāsa, "A devotee of Śrī Rāma is greater than Śrī Rāma Himself. While Śrī Rāma is like the ocean, illumined saints are like the clouds (that carry its waters and pour it here, there and everywhere); while the Lord is like a sandal-wood tree, saints are like the winds (that waft its fragrance and scatter it in various directions)."

What more should we say, the Lord Himself is completely under the thumb of His devotees. To Durvāsā, the great sage, who had got enraged with Ambarīṣa, the prince of devotees, and who, when chased by His mighty discus Sudarśana, ultimately sought shelter with Śrī Viṣṇu in *Vaikuṇṭha*, the Lord says—

"O *Brāhmaṇa*! I am dominated by My devotees like one who is subordinate to them. Those pious devotees have captured My heart, and I am also dear to them. Without those virtuous devotees who look upon Me as their Supreme goal, I care not for My own Self nor even for Lakṣmī, My eternal Consort. Those who have taken refuge in Me alone, renouncing their wife, children, friends, dwelling, wealth, nay, their very life and the pleasures of this world and the next—how can I dare forsake them, dear sage? Just as devoted and faithful wives win the heart of their virtuous husbands, so do pious souls who have given their heart to Me and look upon all with the same eye, conquer Me by their devotion..... In a nutshell I may tell you that devotees are My very selves and I am the self of the devotees. They know not anyone dearer than I and I know not anyone dearer than them."*

* अहं भक्तपराधीनो ह्यस्वतन्त्र इव द्विज ।
साधुभिर्ग्रस्तहृदयो भक्तैर्भक्तजनप्रियः ॥

The Lord ever follows His devotees like a shadow. He considers their joys and sorrows as His own. For their sake He risks His own honour and dignity, nay, His very consort Goddess Lakṣmī. He broke His own vow not to take up arms in the great *Mahābhārata* war, in order to fulfil the vow of His devotee Bhīṣma. For Arjuna He spared nothing. He assumed the role of his charioteer and even cast a spell of His *Māyā* (delusive power) on Duryodhana and others in order to contrive the death of Jayadratha. He is pledged to protect the life and redeem the word of honour of His devotees even at the risk of exposing Himself to calumny. He has taken a solemn vow as it were to regard the honour and dignity, as well as the joys and sorrows of the devotees as His own. "I belong to the devotees and the devotees belong to Me; this is My sacred vow," declared the Lord to His beloved Arjuna.

What wonder, then, if the mere thought and remembrance of such glorious, blessed and godlike devotees should burn the heap of one's sins, reduce *Mukti* (liberation) to the position of one's handmaid, and ensure unflinching devotion, attachment and access to the lotus-feet of the Lord? Like meditation on God contemplation on saints also brings salvation. Through contemplation on their form we are reminded of their ideas, virtues and deeds and their image is imprinted on our

नाहमात्मानमाशासे मद्भक्तैः साधुभिर्विना ।
 श्रियं चात्यन्तिकीं ब्रह्मन् येषां गतिरहं परा ॥
 ये दारागारपुत्रास्तान् प्राणान् वित्तमिमं परम् ।
 हित्वा मां शरणं याताः कथं तांस्त्यक्तुमुत्सहे ॥
 मयि निर्वद्भहृदयाः साधवः समदर्शनाः ।
 वशीकुर्वन्ति मां भक्त्या सत्स्त्रियः सत्पतिं यथा ॥

साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयं त्वहम् ॥
 मदन्यत्ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ।

mind. And just as light dispels darkness, so does the remembrance of their virtues and deeds wipe out all our sins.

Persons seeking their spiritual welfare and liberation should, therefore, indefatigably try to associate with and serve holy men. This is the only delightful and easy way of developing undying love for the feet of the Lord, and of realizing God. Enumerating the ways of overcoming *Māyā*, *Devarṣi* Nārada says in his "Aphorisms on *Bhakti*"—

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम्? यः सङ्गं त्यजति यो महानुभावं सेवते यो निर्ममो भवति ॥

"Who crosses *Māyā*? He who shakes off attachment, serves the saints and owns nothing as his own."

Freedom from attachment and desires and renunciation of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', however, are very hard to achieve; but the service of saints, like idol-worship, is easy for all. Nay, it is even easier and more practicable and open to direct experience than idol-worship. For cultivation of faith in, and attachment to, a lifeless image may be difficult to some extent; but the service of godlike saints, talking and moving in our midst and constantly showering affection on us, is naturally quite feasible.

The very contact of saints, nay, their very sight brings redemption to the soul. The scriptures have sung the glory of association with saints at many places. Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa says in his *Rāmacaritamānasa*: "Whoever at whatever place or time and by whatever means attained wisdom, fame, wealth, happiness or salvation, know it to be the result of association with saints; there is no other way either in the world or in the *Vedas*."

In sooth, there is no easier, simpler and better way of attaining salvation than *Sātsaṅga*. Of course, if cultivated without faith, it may be slow in bringing about the desired result. No doubt it will continue to benefit us imperceptibly even then; but acceleration in spiritual practice and placidity

of mind may not be experienced till late. Association with saints cultivated with faith and reverence, however, yields immediate results. "Through *Satsaṅga*," says Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa, "A crow may be transformed into a cuckoo and a heron into a swan."

Water kept in a bottle of white glass exposed to the sun will not get hot quite soon; it will be slow in absorbing the heat of the sun. The same water, if kept in a black bottle, will be heated very quickly; for the black colour possesses a special capacity to absorb the sun's rays. Like the sun, saints are incessantly emitting the heat of divine love and the rays of divine effulgence. The mind of those who are lacking in faith does not readily submit to their influence; but those who have dyed their mind in the dark hue of faith,—dark in the sense that it does not take any other colour,—are quickly affected by that divine heat and effulgence and attain the *summum bonum* of their life.

Cultivation of association with saints should, therefore, be accompanied by an endeavour to develop faith and reverence. The real way of developing faith is known to God alone; true reverence can be attained only by those who may be blessed by God with faith in His devotees. Hence our foremost prayer to God should be that He may develop in us faith in and reverence for His lotus-feet as well as for those of His beloved devotees. Talks about their virtues and glory, the contact and sight of reverent souls and exchange of views about faith and reverence with them also tend to strengthen one's faith. Faith and reverence can be awakened and developed in one's heart even by witnessing the activities of truly reverent souls. Even the followers of other religions were overwhelmed with love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa at the mere sight of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and by listening to the divine names uttered by him.

In conclusion it may not be out of place to make on

this occasion a few observations regarding the characteristics of saints. Whoever is possessed of the traits given in verses 13 to 20 of Chapter XII of the *Gītā*, is a saint and a devotee. Some of these traits can be known only by one's own self. The scriptures speak of few such marks by which saints can be distinguished by others. We shall try to give below a few outstanding marks of the devotees.

The foremost characteristic of a devotee is his kindness. He is always engaged in doing good to others. This trait is common to men of knowledge and devotees both. The *Gītā* speaks of such saints as "actively engaged in doing good to all creatures" (XII. 4) and "friendly as well as compassionate" (*Ibid.*, XII. 13). The next important mark is their loving nature. Kindness coupled with love brings "disinterested friendliness". Saints have equal love for all. "Free from passion, arrogance and wrath, those who are devoted to the lotus-feet of Śrī Rāma," says Goswāmī Tulasīdāsa "view the whole universe as permeated by Him; whom can they ever antagonize?"

The next important mark of the saints is their magnetism. Like a lamp they diffuse light all round, with this difference that while the former is material, the latter are embodiments of spiritual effulgence. Their sight alone enhances our wisdom; their contact makes us alive even to our ordinary faults and reforms our conduct. It calls forth virtues, drives away vices and evil propensities and purifies our heart. Then the minutest faults come to the surface and are wiped out by effort. None can misbehave in the presence of devotees; their sight naturally reminds us of God.

On coming face to face with a true devotee, a person equipped with extraordinary faith and reverence would feel as if devotion, equability, compassion, tranquillity, love, joy, spiritual light and a host of other virtues are radiating from the saint and entering into him. He will actually perceive

the evil propensities in his heart being burnt up as hay, and will behold an ocean of kindness and love welling up in the saint's eyes.

As a matter of fact, the whole earth and sky as well as the animate and inanimate creation falling within the range of the saints' vision get sanctified.



Amidst the ever-changing circumstances of our existence, we lessen our helpless vulnerability to suffering when we hold firmly to that which alone is changeless. When we are absorbed in loving God, when we deeply commune with Him pain, fear, temptation, sorrow, all lose their relative power to adversely affect us.

—*Self-Realization*

Worldly enjoyments are fleeting like the flashes of lightning. Human life is ephemeral like a bubble. The vigour of youth is short-lived. All these are illusory in this world. All worldly things generate pain only. There is not even an iota of bliss in this world. The wealth which you covet is only ephemeral, the longing for wife and wealth does but enchain you. One thing which is sweet and pleasant to you at one moment produces the very reverse of that sensation in another moment. Who has not experienced this in this world? Hence it behoves a wise man to concentrate his mind on the *Āman* or the Self and attain the supreme seat of eternal bliss.

—*Swami Sivananda*

The truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night: as long as life lasts. It never ceases.

—*Kabira*

Absolute God through Conduct

—Swami Ramsukhdas

There is a method or an art to do a piece of work. Similarly how to live in a family is an art. Have the best dealings with the members of your family for their welfare by giving up your selfishness and pride. Prove yourself an excellent and an ideal brother, father, husband and son etc. By doing so the atmosphere of the family will be peaceful and cordial. You may say that there will be good atmosphere only if all the members of the family have good dealings. You are right. But I tell you that your best dealings will be an example for others and they will also start to have good dealings. Thus peace will prevail in the family.

In this connection there is another point which is to be kept in mind that you should return good for evil. The other members may trouble you, insult you, harm you and disgrace you but you should comfort, respect, console and praise them. In the *Rāmacaritamānasa* Lord Śiva says to Pārvatī—

उमा संत कइ इहइ बड़ाई । मंद करत जो करइ भलाई ॥

(*Mānasa* V. 40.4)

There is a great need of returning good for evil in these days.

In the *Gītā* God exhorts Arjuna—

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

(*Gītā* II. 47)

"Seek to perform your duty; but never lay claim to its fruit."

Perform your duty to your family. The root cause of quarrels in a family is that every man demands his right but does not do his duty efficiently and sincerely. So perform your duty honestly keeping in mind that the other members of the family have a claim on you. But don't set up a claim on them. Don't expect your wife and sons to obey you, by laying a claim on them. Ask them to do a piece of work in a loving and cordial manner. If they obey you, you will be in a bondage. But if they don't obey you, you will be free from the bondage. You get pleased, if other members do as you desire, but actually it is bondage for you like the sweet poison which kills us. Go on doing good to them even though they may be self-willed and return evil for your good throughout your life.

There was a gentleman who said to another gentleman, "You may try your best but I shall not be angry, you can put it to test." The other gentleman replied, "It is good that you don't get angry but why should I do something wrong to make you angry and try to form a bad nature?" Therefore always form a good nature and perform your duty efficiently and sincerely. Thus by being devoted to your duty you will attain the highest perfection in the form of God-realization.

In the *Gītā* God declares—

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

(*Gītā* XVIII. 45)

Thus by doing good to others and performing your duty well, your life will be good and happy in this world as well as in the next world. God declares in the *Gītā*—

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः ।

(*Gītā* IV. 31)

"To the man, who does not offer sacrifice, even this world is not happy; how then, can the other world be happy?"

Here in this couplet *Yajña* (sacrifice) stands for duty.

So God declares that the man who does not perform his duty is not happy either in this world or in the next world. Therefore the man who does the work with selfishness and pride to get comfort does not get either worldly respect or spiritual progress.

On the other hand the man who does the work for the good and welfare of others by giving up his selfishness and pride gets respect in this world as well as progress in spiritualism. Thus he is happy in this world as well as in the next world.

Some people have a misconception that worldly and spiritual progress can't go together. But according to the *Gītā* there is combination of the two. By having good dealings you will make material as well as spiritual progress. If there is a kind judge, he can't give the right judgment if he shows kindness; and can't show kindness if he gives the right judgment. But God is merciful as well as just, because His laws are full of mercy. God in the *Gītā* declares:

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः॥

(*Gītā* VIII. 6)

This is God's law that whatsoever a man thinks at the time of death, he gets the same body. Thus according to God's law a man by remembering God at the time of death may attain Him. How is this law full of mercy? It is full of mercy because you can attain God merely by thinking of Him at the time of death. Thus either you can attain Him or get the body of a dog by remembering a dog or any other body out of the eighty four lac forms of life by thinking of it. Thus by this merciful law of God you can attain God and be free from the shackles of birth and death. Thus He is merciful as well as just. Similarly by having good and just dealings you can improve your material as well as spiritual life. You think that by means of falsehood,

fraud, dishonesty and deception etc., you gain but actually you spoil your life.

By means of falsehood, fraud and dishonesty you may cheat a person once and get profit but in future will you be able to cheat him any more? As the saying goes 'you can't cook any thing the second time in a pot of wood.' It means that deception can trick a person only once. Thus have fair dealings with others for their welfare by renouncing your selfishness and ego. Be straightforward and simple and see that you get peace and bliss.

The *Gītā* teaches us the lesson of attaining God by doing our duty in the world. Therefore study the *Gītā*, think over its contents and put them into practice. The fact is that salvation or God-realization is self-evident. God (*Parmātmā*) and the soul (*Ātmā*) are pure, not corrupt and depraved but only the man has become corrupt and depraved in his dealings. If he becomes pure and pious in his dealings, he will set things right.



The weakness or disease in you is this attachment to the shell; this clinging, this slavery to the shell. Thus giving up, this clinging, this bondage to the shell is death from the stand point of worldly men. From the stand point of your present vision, that is death, and unless you suffer this death and detach yourself from this shell and the concerns of the shell, you cannot conquer death, you can not rise above anguish, misery, disease or pain. Let the body become as if it never existed. A man of liberation, a free man, is one who lives in Divinity, in Godhead, in such a way that the body was never born.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Correct Yourself

—Late Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

There are lacs of hearers, thousands of preachers, hundreds of those who have understood (what is to be done), but the actual practisant is very rare. A true man is only he (the last), and true gain is derived only by him who practises what he preaches.

*

*

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When you instruct yourself, then alone will your instruction prove to be of any use. What you desire to be practised by others, in the first instance practise it yourself. If you do not do so, your instructions will be no better than acting in a theatrical performance.

*

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There are men who play the roles of Hariścandra, Prahlāda, Śaṅkarācārya and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in dramatic performances, but what do these actors gain except their wages? Through similar poor imitation and acting, you will gain nothing from the point of view of the soul. Therefore, give up acting, and take to sincere practice.

*

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This world is a show full of both good things and bad. The customer gets here whatever he seeks to purchase. Leaving what is bad, be you a customer only for what is good. You will then find only good things exhibited before you. In a mart only such commodities are put on sale for which there may be a demand.

Bear in mind the maxim—the greatest of gain lies in remembrance of God and the greatest of loss lies in forgetting Him. According to this maxim, try as far as

possible to carry on all activities of the world simultaneously with the practice of Divine remembrance.

*

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Do not allow your faith in God to be shaken; on the other hand, let it grow as much as it can. Faith is a great source of strength. Men of faith alone can attain victory over all internal elements and become wholly fearless.

*

*

*

Do not be afraid of any man; be afraid of your own evil conduct, of the impurities of the heart and of lack of Faith in God. He who has lost Faith in God, know him to have met with his spiritual death.

If you are a recipient of any noble service from another, do not reproach that service by trying to pay it back through any act of service of your own. A truly noble service can never be paid back. Your duty in that case lies in rendering your benefactor sincere service with a grateful heart, without any thought of exchange. Try with an honest heart that he does not feel any delicacy in accepting service from you, nor considers that what you are doing was in exchange for what had been done to you.

*

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When you have rendered any service to anybody, forget it; but when you have received any service from anybody, remember it. Forget when you go through any suffering yourself; but remember when you are yourself the cause of suffering to another. Forget whenever you do any good; but remember when you are the recipient of good. Forget when any evil is inflicted on you; but remember when you do any evil yourself.

*

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Do not advertise the evils of another, and neither discuss them nor remember them. Your supreme welfare lies in this.

God is the knower of all hearts, He knows why and under what circumstances, and individual has performed a certain act, and it is He who will deal out the fruit of that action. Why do you interfere in the middle and give an exhibition of the bankruptcy of your intellect, and through your fancies, whether true or false, go on gathering evils in your heart.



धनुर्गृहीत्वौपनिषदं

महास्त्रं

शरं

ह्युपासानिशितं

सन्धयीत ।

आयम्य

तद्भावगतेन

चेतसा

लक्ष्यं

तदेवाक्षरं

सोम्य

विद्धि ॥

"Taking hold of the bow, the great weapon familiar in the *Upaniṣads*, one should fix on it an arrow sharpened with meditation. Drawing the string, O good-looking one, hit that very target that is the imperishable, with the mind absorbed in Its thought."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 2. 3)

In one sense *Brahman* is known to every human being; he knows, 'I am'; but man does not know himself as he is. We all know we are but not how we are. All lower explanations are partial truths but the flower, the essence of the *Vedas*, is that the Self in each of us is *Brahman*.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Why depress your brains through fears and why raise up your energies in supplications? Represent your inner nature; crush not the truth; come out boldly; cry fearlessly at the top of your voice, "I am God, I am God." That is your birthright.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Upanishadic Convocation

(Convocational Advice)

—Prof. H. C. Gaur

Duties to the parents, the *Guru* and the (chance) guests (*Atithi*).

The commandments are:

- Let the mother be a god (dess) to you (*Mātr̥devo Bhava*)
- Let the father be a god unto you (*Pitr̥devo Bhava*)
- Let the preceptor be a god unto you (*Ācāryadevo Bhava*)
- Let the (chance) guest be a god unto you (*Atithidevo Bhava*).

The first three are considered together. Manu has said: "The trouble which the mother and father together endured, in giving birth to and bringing up, cannot be redeemed by a son even in the course of hundred years" (*M.S.*, 2.227) For 'redeemed' the word *Niṣkṛti* is used which is in the sense of re-payment of a debt. Manu continues: "(Therefore) let him always do whatever pleases two of them and to what constitutes the comfort to the preceptor (*Ācārya*). The satisfaction of these (three) has been considered to constitute the highest austerity (*Tapah*)" (*M.S.*, 2.228). For him ".....they alone constitute the three worlds, they are the three orders of society, the three *Vedas* and also the triad of sacrificial fires (*M.S.*, 2.230). "The householder who does not neglect these three, conquers the three worlds—this world by loving devotion to mother, the middle world

(meaning heaven) by loving devotion to father and the world of ultimate reality the region of Brahmā by obedience to the preceptor" (M.S., 2.232-233). Manu continues: "A person who has conscientiously respected these three, is considered to have deeply respected (having attended to) all duties....." Adding ".....all rites are without fruit (*Niṣphala*) for him, who has not respected them" (M.S., 2.234).

The word *Tiṭhi* means a date or a specific arrangement on a day. An *Atiṭhi* is one who arrives without any prior information. Also a person who stays even a night is traditionally regarded as a guest, for he does not stay all the time. He is a (chance) guest. This excludes the guests who are members of the family (and other relations) or those who visit on business and the friends. Manu has prescribed rules about the treatment to be meted to such (chance) guests: may be the *Guru*, a mendicant or a *Brāhmaṇa* priest: "An *Atiṭhi* who arrives after sun-set must never be turned away under any circumstance. Also an *Atiṭhi* whether at proper or improper time, must not be kept without food" (M.S., 3.105). Manu has sarcastically said: "a grass mat, space, water and pleasant conversation, these four things never run out in the house of good people" (M.S., 3.101). Thus the *Atiṭhi* should be offered seat, room and bed, the service be provided and that he should be given farewell appropriate to his status.

In *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* there is a story about a *Brāhmaṇa* boy named Naciketā who was innocuously condemned to death by his father. When he reached there, *Yama* was not present. He did not accept any hospitality from *Yama's* wife and remained without food and water for three days. When *Yama* returned, his wife told him: "...A *Brāhmaṇa Atiṭhi* enters the house like *Vaiśvānara*. Good people propitiate him by offering water for washing feet, what the people do for allaying the conflagration of fire" (*Kaṭh. Up.*, 1.1.7); there are evil

consequences for not doing so (*Muṇḍ. Up.*, 1.2.3). The idea is that a (chance) guest shall not be neglected under any circumstance. Also, "the householder must not himself eat any thing that he does not offer to the *Atithi*. Hospitality to an *Atithi* brings fame, longevity and ensures heaven to him, who practises this" (*M.S.*, 3.106).

Idealism versus reality: Performance of the virtuous deeds and to follow (only) the irreproachable traits of a preceptor.

In an earlier section, the preceptor is eulogized to an extent unequalled in any other religion when the commandment says: "You be, to whom the preceptor is a god (*Ācārya devo bhava*). If *Ācārya* is to be treated as a god (*Deva*), he would be expected to possess the god-like (*Daivika*) traits. In *Bhagvad Gītā*, twenty six of these traits were described by Lord Kṛṣṇa in His discourse to Arjuna. If the *Ācārya* did not possess the divine traits, then the commandment. *Ācārya devo bhava* is meaningless. The ideal concepts have to interact with the reality, inasmuch as the preceptor may or may not possess all the ideal traits. The *Rṣi*, in the commandment below, takes into consideration the natural weakness in a person, who is the *Ācārya*. It cautions the pupil to avoid the possibility of a misjudgment:

"Let only those deeds which are free from blemishes be performed and not others". It continues:

"You must follow only the virtuous deeds in us and not others".

The pupil is cautioned about those traits which are reprehensible. They should not be followed even if they were practised by the *Ācārya*. The *Rṣi* did not consider the *Ācārya* to be of ideal perfection and though possessing predominantly divine traits, but confessed him to be mortal with weaknesses, blind spots, likes and dislikes and is candid to say: follow only the irreproachable qualities of the *Guru* (using the term *Asmākam*). To illustrate: if the preceptor had

the habit of smoking tobacco or marijuana, the pupil was not to follow that, but to accept only the virtuous deeds or habits proceeding from him.

Be respectful to distinguished teachers (*Brāhmaṇas*):

The commandment in respect of learned teachers, who were mostly *Brāhmaṇa*, continues: 'You must not speak when those who are more distinguished than you are in a discourse on spiritual matters. The pupil as a householder must be polite, render service and hospitality due to those superior to him. He should not interpose (his views) when the elders more superior to him, in knowledge and experience, are deliberating on spiritual matters.



सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्
सप्ताचिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः ।
सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा
गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥

"From Him emerge the seven sense-organs, the seven flames, the seven kinds of fuel, the seven oblations, and these seven seats where move the sense-organs that sleep in the cavity (and) have been deposited (by God) in groups of seven."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1. 8)

One should discharge one's social functions, pursue one's business and manage one's financial and other affairs uprightly and in a selfless manner with one's thought fixed on the Name and Form of the Lord. For it is by pursuing all one's activities in a selfless manner and in a benevolent spirit that one attains blessedness.

—*Jayadayal Goyandka*

Remove the Veil

You are not seen—

And I have not the patience to search until you are seen

You are latent in all the visible objects

But still, I cannot recognise you.

Oh! You, invisible Master!

As I haven't seen you even once

Let me not join the atheists denying Thee!

Then, your people try to persuade me

Oh, wonder of wonders,

They deny all that is seen,

And I do not believe them

If you do exist, then be present

Or else, you are as well non-being!

Why favour a few, and elude many?

Oh, I can't withstand the pangs of separation

My Lord! Make me fit to realise you,

And let me feel your presence at once.

—*English rendering*: Dr. Vadavalli Chakrapani Rao



The Art of Living (The Bhagavad Gītā)

—Purushotam Lal

The *Bhagavadgītā* enshrines the true art of living. It appeals to all classes of people and has been held to be sacred over the ages.

In its short compass of 700 verses the *Bhagavadgītā* touches upon every aspect of the Indian Philosophy. Its approach is positive and appreciative of all the known and prevalent paths of progressive evolution within their respective spheres. Also the solutions suggested for overcoming impediments in the progress are entirely practical and easily understood.

Further the *Bhagavadgītā* ^{avoid}eschews dogmatic declarations with its rationals being clear and unambiguous. Those going through its text are left free to weigh the things and satisfy themselves by their personal experience about the veracity of the statements for practical application. While this is all to the good, some people are apt to emphasise upon whatever impresses them most having regard to their own nature and inclinations.

Probably this is the main reason for the large number of commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā* by renowned Masters, sages and scholars. There are shades of difference in the interpretations and implications as brought out in these commentaries.

For example in earlier times, in the first and foremost commentary by Śāṅkarācārya, there was the unequivocal declaration about the Absolute Oneness of the Supreme

Lord with all forms of manifest existence being regarded as mythical and unreal. On the other hand, Madhvācārya in his commentary expressed his belief in the duality between the Supreme Lord and the soul.

In modern times, B.G. Tilaka has highlighted the primacy of *Karma Yoga* or the efficacy of action. Whereas Aurobindo Ghōṣa brings forth the concept of *Integral Yoga* with equal importance for action, devotion, meditation and knowledge.

However, all these are finer points and leaving them aside in the initial stages, anyone who resorts to the study of the *Bhagavadgītā* text directly or with the help of one or the other commentary, will be able to bring about a qualitative change in the content and pattern of his life.

The very first lesson inculcated by the *Bhagavadgītā* is the one of cultivating even-mindedness or equanimity at all times and in all circumstances whether favourable or otherwise.

The *Bhagavadgītā* specifically mentions three gates to hell namely lustful desires, anger and greed. Failure in lustful desires leads to anger while the fulfilment of such desires opens the flood gates of greed.

According to the *Bhagavadgītā* the Supreme Lord resides equally in all beings as the Inner Witness and the Supporter. Therefore, it has been declared—wisdom consists in seeing with an equal eye each and every living being whether it be the learned and cultured Brahmin, the cow, the elephant, the dog, the outcaste. There is a further declaration in the *Bhagavadgītā* to the effect that all those whose mind rests in such equality become qualified for their release from the travails of mortal existence.

For balanced existence, one is advised in the *Bhagavadgītā* not to rejoice in getting what is pleasant as also not to grieve in getting what is unpleasant. This is further amplified by

saying that one should learn to regard a clod of earth, a stone and gold of equal worth, unmoved by praise and blame alike, alike in honour and dishonour and also a friend and foe alike.

Another significant concept outlined in the *Bhagavadgītā* is that all beings in the world can be divided into two types—the *Daivika* or the divine and the *Āsurika* or the demoniac. Their respective possession i.e., wealth termed as divine or demoniac is comprised of their diametrically opposite qualities which have been described in detail. Divine wealth is deemed to be for liberation and the demoniac wealth for bondage or continued suffering.

The *Bhagavadgītā* does not at all favour severe *Tapah* or austerities which at times take the form of exposing the body to excessive heat or cold, abstinence from food for long periods, great physical exertion etc. Those who indulge in such activities are held to be senseless, torturing the body as also the lord indwelling therein.

The *Bhagavadgītā* advises man to raise himself by his own efforts and not to debase himself. A clear warning is given that he alone is his own friend and he alone is his own enemy. This is clarified by the statement that whoever has conquered the lower nature by his own efforts is his own friend and who has not subdued his lower nature is his own enemy.

The *Bhagavadgītā* does not advocate *Sannyāsa* or renunciation that would imply dissociation altogether from the world and withdrawal from all types of relationships and interaction with other people. There is an emphatic declaration in the *Bhagavadgītā* that the renunciation of obligatory action or prescribed duty is not at all proper. The performance of such action or the prescribed duty must necessarily continue to be undertaken while giving up attachment for it or its fruit.

Each man is responsible and accountable for his own sins or virtues. The *Bhagavadgītā* specifically mentions that the Supreme Lord does not receive the virtue or sin of anyone. With this freedom man's progressive evolution is the result of his own initiative and efforts.

The *Bhagavadgītā* does not prescribe any special code or form of worship. What is important is the spirit in which worship is offered. To bring home this point, it is stated in the *Bhagavadgītā* that the Supreme Lord is pleased to accept with joy the symbolical offering of love and devotion comprised of a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water.

In the *Bhagavadgītā*, control over the turbulence and restlessness of the mind is sought to be achieved through constant practice, *Abhyāsa*, and elimination of lustful desires. *Vairāgya*. The simile used for the peaceful mind is that of a lamp which does not flicker in a windless place.

How to remain undisturbed and counter the onslaught of desires? This question is succinctly answered in the *Bhagavadgītā* by the statement that as the river and other streams enter the ocean, which though filled from all sides, remains undisturbed, likewise he in whom all desires merge attains peace and not he who cherishes these desires.

The *Bhagavadgītā* lays stress on knowledge holding that there is nothing so purifying as knowledge. But what exactly and truly is this knowledge? The *Bhagavadgītā's* answer is forthright, True knowledge consists in the clear realisation of the One Imperishable Supreme Lord equally in all beings without any distinction whatsoever. This is explained further by saying that the Supreme Lord is to be seen as the undivided though looking divided in the different beings. This realisation and understanding is to be constantly practised and applied all the time in all dealings in the day to day existence.

Each being in the universe is designated as the *Jiva* and

the indwelling divinity therein as the *Jīvātmā*. Since the essential nature of the *Jīvātmā* is held to be akin to that of the Supreme Lord, the *Jīvātmā* is eternal, immutable and imperishable like the Supreme Lord. As such, the *Jīvātmā* does not cease to exist on the destruction of the body. In that event the *Jīvātmā* with the essence of the tendencies acquired in the course of the earlier births, takes one body after another till liberation is achieved. In this background, it is declared in the *Bhagavadgītā* that there should be no occasion to grieve for the dead or the living.

According to one's inherent nature he may take to the path of knowledge, action, devotion or meditation with control over the mind and avoidance of lustful desires. These paths are dealt with fully in the *Bhagavadgītā*. There is, however, a special emphasis on the path of action since Kṛṣṇa had to dispel the delusion of Arjuna in declining to perform his obligatory duty in waging the war against the *Kauravas*. So it is explained at length how action is superior to inaction and why it is important for each and everyone to perform his duty. Actions performed in the true spirit without any attachment and with no desire for the fruit tend to purify the mind making it stable and one pointed. This brings about even-mindedness or equanimity which becomes the stepping stone for all round advancement.

The recognition of the responsibility for performance of obligatory actions is imperative for those who are held to be leaders or become distinguished. The *Bhagavadgītā* points out that whatever such a person does, the same thing is done by others. Whatever standard he sets up is followed by the people at large.

These are outlines of some of the salient feature dealt with in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The *Bhagavadgītā* puts across as well several other salient features which can and do help in moulding the character and personality.

In conclusion it may be stated that the *Bhagavadgītā* holds a variety of lessons for everyone whether young or old, great or not so great, in any walk or the stage of life. Its careful study can be most purposeful and rewarding in determining the art of living as is appropriate for each person in his sphere of performance.



The Divine is running this entire universe and giving life and sustenance to billions of souls—upholding all things animate and inanimate. He is so busy, yet he never forgets His divine Self. He is always immersed in His own bliss. We are tiny soul-sparks of His being, made in His image; and that is the way we too, ought to behave in this world. We can perform all duties joyously, blissfully—manifesting cheerfulness during all changing circumstances, allowing nothing to deflect us from our relationship with the Divine.

—Self-Realization

When everything is had as ordained by divine dispensation; why should we merely degrade ourselves by hankering after any worldly object? It is egregious folly to hanker after any worldly object. Therefore, giving up the desire for everything else, one should long for God-realization alone.

—Jayadaya! Goyandka

In *Caitanya Samādhī* the *Yogī* has perfect awareness. He comes down with divine knowledge. He gives inspired talks and messages and those who hear him are much elevated. The subtle desires are destroyed by this *Samādhī* and the *Yogī* attains perfect freedom.

—Swami Sivananda

God-Realisation for Householders

—R. L. Sharma

Q.1- Can we realise God while remaining in the world, while living as householders?

Answer: No one can live outside the world. Even the *Samnyāsīs* live in the world. You may leave your home, you may retire into the forest or Himalayas; still the place is not outside the world.

2. The householders, who have not realised God have to suffer due to adverse circumstances such as mental tension, poverty, disease, death, dishonour, old age, etc. If they want to live peacefully, they must first realise God. They should pray to God sincerely with tears in eyes, they should read holy books and practise meditation for one or two hours daily. *Satsaṅga* (company of saints and devotees) is very essential for them. Although they live in the world, their minds should be free from worldliness. Spiritual practices viz., chanting of God's name, singing His glories etc., should be given importance in daily life. They should live an honest life and earn their bread with fair means. By following these means they should first realise God. Then only they can live in the world safely like "Janaka". After God-realisation they would be able to retain sameness under pleasures and pains, honour and dishonour, health and disease, good and bad circumstances. Poverty will not upset them. Wealth will not make them egoistic. Old age will not disturb them fear of death of body will vanish forever.

3. The boat can live in water but water should not live

in the boat. It is but natural for the boat to live in the water. But if water lives in the boat, if the boat becomes full of water, it (the boat) would sink. Similarly we can live in the world. In fact no one can live outside the world. But worldliness should not enter our hearts.

4. Before entering a pond the body must be rubbed with turmeric lotion; otherwise the crocodiles would eat you up. Similarly before doing householder works, before living as householders, we must saturate our minds with love of God. We must realise our Divinity. Otherwise household duties would bring tension and mental disturbance. For this purpose the householders must practice *Sādhana*s in solitude for some hours daily. You may have a house to live. But attachment with house must go. You may have a family, but attachment with family members must go. You may earn money with fair means. But attraction for money and sense of mine, must be given up. Attraction for worldly things such as wealth, house, wife, child etc., is ignorance and must be given up. This would become possible only if you pray to God sincerely for His love and if you seek the company of realised saints and devotees. Therefore, if you want to live peacefully in the world you must first realise God and for that you must do spiritual practices. That does not mean that we should first renounce the world and leave our homes for God-realisation. That simply means that we should, while living as householders, do spiritual practices continuously and keep our minds towards God till we realise Him or attain His love.

5. The milk gets mixed up with water. But butter floats on water and does not get mixed up with it. The mind which is impure, which has not realised God, becomes worldly soon. Greed, anger, lust enter it at once. But after God-realisation the mind becomes pure and like butter, it remains unaffected by ups and downs of life. Greed, anger, lust,

egotism, cannot enter such a mind. It is free from tension.

6. Those householders who do not make God as their aim of life, who do not take up spiritual practices can never live peacefully in the world without any disturbance. Envy, hatred, sense of comparison, losses and dishonour—such things would always disturb them. Finally death (which robs away all their belongings) would bring utter frustration and agony. They would not be able to get rid of it through any means. In spite of their wealth, wisdom, post or power, they would not be able to avoid fear of death and sense of insecurity due to it.

7. If a householder is running after sense enjoyments, if he is attached with money, woman, honour or power, if he does not give up sense of mine; if he is egoistic, how can he realise God with all such shortcomings. Therefore, a householder must understand his weaknesses and try to get rid of these through constant prayers to God and spiritual practices viz., *Satsaṅga*, meditation, chanting of Divine name and reading of holy books. He should do all this and wait patiently till God is gracious and grants His love and *Jñāna*. He should not mind even in case he has to wait all his life for this aim. If we have to wait for a long time, it is actually due to our own weak will power. Otherwise if you go one step towards God, He comes four steps towards you.

8. We should make the best use of our "will power" and then surrender ourselves to God. Grace comes only when self effort is followed by self-surrender. Everything is in the hands of God. No spiritual attainment is possible unless He is pleased.

9. Mental renunciation (renunciation of desires, egotism, sense of mine, sense of doership, attachment towards objects of sense enjoyments etc.) is the most important thing in the matter of God-realisation. Even a householder can

equip himself with such mental renunciation. If a *Samnyāsī* (who has left his home and family) does not possess mental renunciation, he also cannot realise God though he may wander all alone in the forest or mountain caves throughout life. Hence a householder should mentally renounce all desires and attachments and take up spiritual practices to realise God. After Self-Realisation he can live in the world with his family peacefully like Janaka (like lotus in water).

Q.2 How can we get rid of lust, greed, anger, attachment and egotism.

Answer: (i) There are two ways. One way is to apply will power and make efforts to control the mind and senses. Simultaneously we should pray to God to assist us in the matter. This method is generally used by the "*Yogīs*" and "*Jñānīs*".

(ii) Another way, which is the best one, is to love God whole-heartedly and attain "*Premā Bhakti*" through His grace. When we are in ecstatic love for God, the senses and mind come under control automatically. On the day when some one dies in the house, we forget all other things. On that day we don't quarrel with any one or do not lose temper or do not bother to think about lust or greed. Similarly when we are in the state of *Bhāva* (ecstatic love for God) lust, greed, anger etc., come under control automatically. Therefore the easiest way to control the senses is to pray to God that we may get joy in chanting the Divine Name, in singing His glories, in meditation and so on. Once we get these, lust, greed, anger, attachments, egotism and worldly desires vanish altogether. On attaining *Bhāva* (*Premā Bhakti*) a man becomes completely free from such obstacles. God protects His beloved devotees from these hurdles. The devotee has not to make any effort from his side, nor there is a chance of fall.

(iii) As long as we have not attained Divine love or *Premā Bhakti*, as long as the repetition of Divine name appears tasteless to us, we must follow the first method (i.e., apply our will power and try to control the mind and senses and pray to God to assist us in the matter). We should also discriminate between the real and unreal and seek the company of devotees and realised Saints who are free from all worldly desires, lust, greed, anger and egotism. However, in this (first method) there is always a danger that the ego of controlling the senses may develop. But in the second method (i.e. method of *Premā Bhakti*) there can be no egotism as the devotees always live in a spite of Self Surrender.

Q.3: In spite of best efforts, the sense of "I" and "Mine" does not go. What to do? Similarly it is very hard to give up the sense of "doership". Is there any easy way? I mean, a way easier than what you have explained previously. How can we renounce other evil tendencies of mind easily?

Answer: No doubt it is difficult to give up the sense of I and Mine. Sometimes these tendencies return even after *Samādhi*. The easier way is to keep the ripe "I" (ripe ego) such as "I am a child of God", "I am a servant or lover of God". The unripe "I" which says, "I am rich; I am strong; I can do everything."—that type of ego is harmful. But the ripe "I" is harmless. It says, "I am His child and everything belongs to Him. The body, house, wealth and post or power—all these things belong to Him." Nothing in the world is mine. Nothing belongs to me. These types of "I and Mine", are known as ripe "I and Mine" and are totally harmless. The ripe "I" is helpful in realising God..... Similarly one can renounce the sense of "doership" by a strong conviction that God is doing everything. He would do whatever is best for us. Grace is hidden in every action that He does for us. Even if the Grace looks unpleasant

it must be for our good in the long run. (In fact God has assured the devotees that in case they surrender to Him, He would look after them and remove all their difficulties and they need not worry. (*Gītā* XVIII. 66). Therefore those who have renounced their sense of I, Mine and "doership" in the above way need not worry for anything. They should pray to God with tears in eyes and leave everything to Him).



यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽ-
स्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।
तथा विद्वान्नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः
परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥

"As rivers, flowing down, become indistinguishable on reaching the sea by giving up their names and forms, so also the illumined soul, having become freed from name and form, reaches the self-effulgent *Puruṣa* that is higher than the higher (*Māyā*)."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III. 2. 8)

Find ways to bring God into your life everyday as much as possible. Take a moment to let the mind go within, become aware of the spiritual eye, and even though you may be very busy with work, repeat, "For You, God for You." Then go on with your duties. That constant reminder, that bringing the mind back to the focus point, helps us keep our inner balance.

—*Self-Realization*

The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him—that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Family Planning

—R .C. M. Tripathi

Family planning and explosive condition of growing population is a subject of great concern to the sociologists, economists and administrators, all over the world. Undoubtedly the growing population is assuming the form of a menace which the sciences concerned are finding difficult to check. In every walk of life the increase in the population has started pinching any body and everybody—rich and poor alike.

Even though the agricultural production has more than doubled yet it is still inadequate to fill the expectant bellies. The exorbitant prices of the commodities of day to day use are becoming prohibitive. The standard man is baffled with his mouth wide open, what this all is happening. He is finding himself quite incompetent to meet out his bare necessities e.g., food, clothings and shelter. There seems to be nowhere, any silver lining behind the thickly clouded socio-economic spheres. A terrible confusion is prevailing everywhere and in every walk of life.

There are only two remedial measures—(a) produce more (b) cut the family short. Production may one day reach the saturation point leaving no further scope. But growing rate of population does not seem to have any saturation. The medical sciences have effectively checked the death rate and the average life span has decidedly expanded but the birth rate is not checked and it is almost the same with the result of multiplying population. There comes family planning

or birth control as a device. Every country in the world has felt the pinch of growing population and is fighting against it. In some of the countries like China even the law has been enacted to limit the size of the family to a prescribed number and any overlap has been declared cognizable offence. They are not concerned with what measures are going to be adopted. Their only concern is the small size of the family, howsoever silly and absurd it may look, but the fact is fact. In India also several measures have been adopted legally and socially both. Abortion has been legalised howsoever immoral and unethical it may be. The sterilizing operations of several techniques are in vogue. Several medicines have been invented to avoid pregnancy and several artificial equipments are also available in the market.

It is a pity that the leading inventors in the field do not at all bother about the future effect of these devices on the physique of the subject. The result is even the healthy subjects get sickly in the long run. Moreover all these artificial means are against the nature so the evil effect is inevitable. The natural calamities like flood, earthquake, epidemics and wars have been successfully reduced if not eradicated. So the balancing power of the nature is almost made ineffective.

The population rate must be briddled. But the most important question is how it should and could be done. Once Gāndhījī said—"I sincerely believe that birth control through artificial means will certainly bring a moral fall of the mankind." We now see and experience for ourself the degrading and degenerating effect in the present social life. It will be vulgar to talk about how it added to the social corruption mostly sexual. With the invention of the machine ascertaining the gender of the foetus in the womb, has resulted in massive murder of the future girl babies. It is

soothing that some sort of legal ban has been imposed on the use of such machines.

The question is—"Is the killing the only and unavoidable and indispensable means to have a check over the population rate? Is there no other safer course which may yield the desired result without endangering the social health? Certainly there is and that is in the form of maintaining *Āśrama* system which provides only a span of twenty-five years at the most for procreation. It was an ideal social arrangement. The initial twenty-five years under strict celibacy and after fifty years of age some sort of *Vānaprastha* life seems to be the only remedy. In this direction a few measures are suggested hereunder:

(1) The marriageable age must be prescribed twenty-one for the girls and twenty-five for the boys. There is no difficulty in doing it as the society is fully prepared to welcome this measure.

(2) No person should be allowed to become a father or mother before twenty-five and after fifty.

(3) Abortion should be declared unlawful and a severe punishment should be inflicted on both the partners.

(4) Even a death sentence can be prescribed for the doctors and surgeons. There is no harm in changing the penal code to suite the purpose.

(5) A minimum interval between two deliveries must be prescribed five years in the minimum.

If the biped animals cannot go for self restraints, they must be brought to it by force of law. Acute diseases always require drastic remedies. A few more suggestions are further offered as under:

(1) Having only one or two children, the families must be awarded through encouragement.

(2) Families having three or more children must be penalized by curtailing their financial facilities or even imposing monetary penalties.

These measures may seem strong and even inhuman to a certain extent but they have already stopped to be human beings in several respects. If only one generation is made to undergo such rigorous penancing life the future generations will automatically be used to the right way of life.



Do any kind of wrong, do any mischief, harbour in your mind any kind of wrong: do these wrong deeds, commit these sins even at a place where you are sure nobody will catch you or find you, where nobody will call you to question. Sow these seeds of evil wherever you please, even in a place as secure as any fort could be; sow the wind and by the most stern, unrelenting, irrefragable, irretrievable law, you reap the whirlwind; you must be visited with pain and suffering. The wages of sin is death.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Live in the world, but be not worldly. As the saying goes, make the frog dance before the snake, but let not the snake swallow the frog.

—Sri Ramakrishna

There is no virtue higher than Truth, there is no sin greater than falsehood; therefore should man seek protection under Truth with all his soul.

—Mahānirvāṇa Tantra

Keep yourselves far from envy; because it eateth up and taketh away good actions as fire eateth up and burneth wood.

—Mohammed

Symbols Used for Soul in the Upaniṣads

—Dr. Prativa Devi

It is Marx who admitted that the reality of the past seems reflected in mythological fantasy. (Engles: *The origin of the family, Private Property and the State*. Moscow] 1952: 170) Therefore, it is a part of our research to examine the mythological fantasy whether in the form of symbols or metaphors in order to arrive at the ancient reality. The author confines herself to the concept of "Soul" as a symbol.

The concept of Soul is a concept beyond any sense perception. Neither human language nor the Transcendental Silence is adequate enough to explain the concept of soul that is *Ātman*. This ancient reality is expressed in the *Upaniṣads* which are a highly complex text, often rife with contradictions since they are written in a language clustered with symbols, images and metaphors. Often the text is meant to exercise some evocative spell on the readers. Parts of them have poetic and philosophical significance as much as it can be conveyed in metaphors and symbols. A cursory glance at *Kaṭha*, *Īśa*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Śvetaśvatara*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Kena*, makes it evident that the text is rendered highly readable by rhythmic composition, through the sonorous appeal of individual lines, by reason of assonances and metaphoric language. This sufficiently points up to the fact that the authors kept the arousal of interest and sustenance of attention in the foreground while composing them. In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya* parables and tales compose the warp and woof. These two are also highly attractive

as text. We may safely infer that these texts were composed to initiate the students into the activity of philosophical meditation without distracting them by hairsplitting logic or dry philosophical discourse which we find in commentaries on *Vedānta* or *Sāṃkhya*.

Śrī Aurobindo sees in the *Upaniṣads*: " Perfectly lucid and luminous brevity and immeasurable completeness... There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure of each *Upaniṣad*: but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence. (Śrī Aurobindo, *The Upaniṣads*. Pondicherry; Śrī Aurobindo Āśrama: 1992: 5) While analysing the rhythm, imagery and symbols, Śrī Aurobindo outbursts emotionally. He says: "The rhythm in Verse or cadenced prose corresponds to the sculpture of the thought and the phrase. The metrical forms of the *Upaniṣads* are made up of four half lines each clearly cut, the lines mostly complete in themselves and integral in sense, the half lines presenting two thoughts or distinct parts of thought that are wedded to and complete in each other, and the sound movement follows a corresponding principle, each step brief and marked off by the distinctness of its pause, full of echoing cadences that remain long vibrating in the inner hearing It is a kind of poetry-word of vision and rhythm of the spirit...The imagery of the *Upaniṣads* is in large part developed from the type of imagery of the *Veda* and though very ordinarily it prefers an unveiled clarity of directly illuminative image, not unoften also it uses the same symbols in a way that is closely akin to the spirit and to the less technical part of the method of the older symbolism." (Śrī Aurobindo 1992: 5-6)

The *Upaniṣads* hold that the soul or the self is an individual substance, eternal and all-pervading. It cannot be

identified with body, senses and mind. It can be compared to the shining of the moon. Moon appears to be the source of light, but in reality moon light is but a reflection of the sun, so the body, senses, mind are the reflections of the Ātman and Ātman is an independent entity. *Chāndogya* (8: 7: 1—3) clearly mentions that the Self is free from evil, old age, death, grief, hunger and thirst.

In an interesting parable of the *Chāndogya* both gods and demons went to Prajāpati to enquire about the true nature of the self. Indra on behalf of gods and Virocana on behalf of the demons went to Prajāpati to learn the truth. They initiated the dialogue that Self is the image which we see either in water or in a mirror. A mirror or water simply reflects the physical body not the real self. Then Prajāpati asked Indra to dress himself and see how he looks in a mirror or in water. Indra saw the shadow of his own body in the water. Now the question comes if the Self is not the body, can it be the self in dream? We may be happy in a dream but in real life may be unhappy. Dream state cannot be the real state of the Self. Again Indra approaches Prajāpati to clear his confusion. Prajāpati suggested that the self is the consciousness in deep sleep. But during deep sleep the consciousness of neither the self nor the objective world remain though Self exists. In the words of Rādhākṛṣṇan:

The true self is the absolute self, which is not an abstract metaphysical category but the authentic spiritual self. The other forms belong to objectified being. Self is life, not an object. It is an experience, in which the self is the knowing subject and is at the same time the known object. Self is open only to self. (S. Rādhākṛṣṇan— *The Principal Upaniṣads*. 1953 London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968: 75).

The self exists in four states for the four kinds of self, *Vaiśvānara*, the experiencer of gross things, *Taijasa*, the experiencer of the subtle, *Prājña*, the experiencer of the

unmanifested objectivity, and the *Turīya*, the Supreme Self. That is what in the *Māṇḍūkya* appears to be the analysis of the four kinds of consciousness, waking, dream, deep sleep, and illumined consciousness.

From the parable of Indra—Virocana it is explicit that when Prajāpati means by the self the subject of all seeing, both Indra and Virocana wrongly understood the Self as the person that is seen, not the person that sees. Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan explains this parable in his note: "The person seen in the eye is the figure imaged in the eye, and they ask whether the image that is seen in the water and in the mirror is the self. At this stage the pupils confuse the true self with the body." (Rādhākṛṣṇan 1968: 502)

Soul is a subtle conscious entity which remains concealed in the mind. (*Atharv.* 10:8:18) It has no physical form but possesses a subtle body which comprises five *Prāṇas*, five senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing; five subtle elements of water, earth, ether, fire, air; mind and intellect. (*Sāṅkhya* 3:9) *Chāndogya* speaks "He is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice..... smaller than a millet seed or the kernel of a millet seed. He also is my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds." (3:14:3)

Śvetāśvatara explains the infinite nature of the self as: "This living self is to be known as a part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair divided a hundred fold, yet it is capable of infinity. It is not female, nor is male; nor yet is this neuter whatever body it takes to itself, by that it is held. (5:13:9-10) Again in the same *Upaniṣad* the self is described as: "Subtler than the subtle, greater than the great is the self that is set in the cave of the heart of the creature. (3:20) *Chāndogya* explains human soul in the following language: "Verily, what is called *Brahman*, that is what the space outside of a person is. Verily, what the space outside of a person is." (3:12:7-8)

In spite of such a lofty definition for a common man the *Upaniṣads* describe the self as a size of rice or barley grain (*Br* 5:6:1; *Kaṭha*. 1:2:20) or as the size of a thumb (*Kaṭha*. 2:2:12) or as the size of a "Span". (*Chānd*. 5:18:1) The *Māṇḍūkya* tells that all is *Brahman*, the *Ātman* itself is *Brahman*, so the self has four parts. The first part of *Brahman* is the *Vaiṣvānara* self who is the waking self having seven limbs and nineteen mouths, through which the self experiences the external world. The second part of *Brahman* is the *Taijasa* self through its seven limbs and nineteen mouths awake in the dream state experiencing the subtle objects within the mind. The third part of the *Brahman* is the *Prājña* self or deep slumber, complete withdrawal of consciousness. Only after awaking from slumber one remembers that he or she had a deep sleep. The final part of *Brahman* is in the state of *Turiya*. (*Māṇḍu*. 2—6) In this state the self remains a *Sākṣī* or witness of the three previous states. But this state requires another consciousness to record the experience of the *Turiya*.

These are all but the symbolic expressions of the soul. A few more examples can be cited in this context. Soul has no attributes. It is devoid of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. (*Kaṭha*. 3:5) It is beyond all sensible qualities. So it cannot be perceived through the external sense-organs. It is devoid of pleasure and pain. So it cannot be perceived through *Manas* or the internal organ. (*Kena*. 1.5) It is undefinable by speech, and unattainable by the outer or inner senses. (*Kaṭha*. 3:12; *Tait*. 2:4:1)

Jadunātha Sinhā explains the concept of the soul following the *Upaniṣads*. He says:

"The *Ātman* is beyond the categories of space, time and causality. It contains space but is not spatial; it contains time but is not temporal; it contains causality, but is not subject to the law of causality. It is spaceless, timeless, and

causeless. It is the ultimate reality. It is the noumenon. It is beyond the categories of the phenomenal world. So it cannot be comprehended by the intellect which can know only phenomena bound by space, time and causality. The intellect can give only categorized knowledge. The *Ātman* is beyond all categories. So it is beyond the grasp of the intellect. (*Indian Psychology*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1986: 1:246)

Sinhā's statements are meant to show that the soul is the creative self which remains unaltered in spite of all the changes, fluctuations and alterations in the state of consciousness. It operates through consciousness that makes experience possible. It is the knower, so it cannot be known though its functions partly reveal its potentiality. Neither can we comprehend it if we limit it to some of the functions.

So, the *Upaniṣads* say: "The *Ātman* is the seer but is not seen; it is the hearer but is not heard; it is the comprehender but is not comprehended; it is the thinker but is not thought." (*Bṛ* 3:8:11) The *Ātman* is the *Sākṣin* or witness (*Śvetā.* 6:14) the *Paridraṣṭr* or seer (*Praśn.* 6:5), the *Vijñātr* or knower. (*Bṛ* 2:4:14) Here how can a knower be known and can a subject be an object of knowledge? The *Upaniṣads* declare it as *Bhūmā* or infinite, where one cannot see any other thing, one cannot hear any other thing or one cannot comprehend any other thing. (*Chānd.* 7:24:1) So it is a non-dual philosophy where except *Ātmā* nothing exists. For where there is duality as it were, there one smells another, there one sees another, there one thinks of another, there one understands another. Where, verily, everything has become the Self, then by what and whom should one smell, then by what and whom should one see, then by what and whom should one hear, then by what and to whom should one speak, by what and on whom should one think, by what and whom should one understand? (*Bṛ* 2:4:14) In such

case *Ātman* is bound to be unknowable.

Our sense-organs are created in such a way that except the outward external objects, we cannot see or comprehend the innerself. It can be realised through *Yoga* (*Kaṭha*. 2:3:11) or through the supra-intellectual or *Prajñāna* alone. It is even beyond the area of *Manas* or mind and *Buddhi* or intellect.



Bhagavadgītā teaches a balance of meditation and activity. "All good work is God's work, if you perform it with divine consciousness." "Only work done with a purely selfish motive is material. In earning money, always think that you are doing so for your fellow beings...Destroy the false division between material and spiritual work.....All work is purifying if done with the right motive."

—Self-Realization

It is sheer ungratefulness on our part not to remember God. When we cannot repay the obligations of even our parents and teachers much less can we repay the obligations of God, who is our best friend. Such being the case, it is sheer ungratefulness—the meanest of all mean acts to forget Him.

—Jayadaya! Goyandka

Those who give themselves up to the Lord, do more for the world than all the so-called workers. One man who has purified himself thoroughly accomplishes more than a regiment of preachers. Out of purity and silence comes the word of power.

—Swami Vivekananda

When a tree is burning with fierce flames, how can the birds congregate therein? Truth cannot dwell where passion lives.

—Buddha

Read and Digest

—V. P. Tandon

He alone sees the divine light who is slave to nothing,
not even to his virtues.

* * *

The true devotees of God turn to Him in the morning,
at noon, in the evening and in the night.

* * *

God alone was the only reality in the beginning and
in all *Yugas*, He is the only reality in the present and He
will ever remain the only reality in future.

* * *

True religion asks for doing good, warmer and more
human deeds and returning good for evil.

* * *

Entry to spiritual kingdom is open to all; but all evils
must cease before one can see or enjoy God.

* * *

Man should wake to reality about life and God in time
before it is too late.

* * *

Always be careful in what, how, when, where and to
whom you speak.

* * *

God is the only source or means and aim of human
life's sustenance, enrichment, development and progress.



Avadhūta's Teachers

(Based on Śrīmad Bhāgavata)

—Shantilal Thaker

The *Avadhūta* was meek and humble. He did not disdain anybody from whom he could pick up some wisdom. During his wanderings he came across many people, birds, beasts, animals, from whose behaviour and characteristic nature he deduced spiritual truths, maxims and rules of behaviour, that would conduce to his spiritual progress. To him what Shakespeare has said in his 'As you like it' was literally true. He found 'books in running books, sermons in stones, and good in everything.'

(1) His first teacher was mother Earth. People spit on her, pass urine and excreta on her, tread upon her; but she forgives them all their trespasses. In return for their ill she gives them from her bowels gold, silver, iron, coal and other useful and valuable material. She gives them corn to eat, without which they would not be able to live. Similarly, a spiritual seeker should cultivate the noble quality of forgiveness. Those that censure his body are his friends and helpmates; for he has firmly to fix his mind on the Self. For their abuses, censures, fault-finding, he should give supreme thankfulness. He should give them the benefit of his spiritual power, self-knowledge and Yogic capacities.

(2) Wind was his second teacher. The wind bloweth where it listeth. So, in order to avoid attachments the *Sādhaka* should not live at one place for a very long time. He should be constantly on the move. That would give him

an opportunity to come into contact with many mature souls to him and win spiritual liberation. The wind carries with it good smell as well as bad smell, but keeps it with him only for a short while. It is untainted and pure. Similarly, a *Sādhaka*, should not be tainted by the goodness or badness of people, into whose contact he comes. He should firmly establish himself in the Self and its pristine purity. The wind, again, is subtle, not perceptible to the eye. The *Sādhaka's* ways, similarly, should be subtle and not an open book for all and sundry to read. He should be a real mystic, living in the depths of the spirit, not on the surface of existence.

(3) The sky was his third teacher, It is all-pervading. Similarly, the Self also is all-pervading. It is the most subtle of all the five gross elements. Likewise, the Self also is subtle. Clouds pass over the sky. Some are white and others dark. The sky appears to be coloured by their hues; but it is only an appearance. Really speaking, it remains pure, unsullied, untainted. Even so, the Self appears to be tainted by the various modifications of the mind; but in reality, it remains absolutely pure and unsullied.

(4) Water was his fourth teacher. It is always flowing. So the *Sādhaka* also should be constantly and continuously on the move, flowing, progressive. Water washes everything clean. So the *Sādhaka* should purify all who come into contact with him. Water is cool. So the *Sādhaka* should communicate coolness, consolation, peace to all worldly people, whose minds are torn by worldly anxieties, riven by cares and worries, and who come to him for peace and quiet. Water is liquid. It is soft. Similarly a *Sādhaka* should be soft-hearted, kind and compassionate.

(5) Fire was his fifth teacher. It is bright. A *Sādhaka* should burn with spiritual illumination. It cooks food. Similarly, a *Sādhaka* or *Siddha Yogī* should mature the mental impressions (*Samskāras*) of the people who come

to him, and make them riper for Self-realization. Fire burns and purifies and devours all dirt. So the *Sādhaka* should burn all the sins and impurities of the people who come to him, in the flame of his Self-knowledge. Fire drives away cold and gives warmth and heat. So the *Sādhaka* should remove the people's fear and dread of ignorance, and give them spiritual solace and comfort.

(6) His sixth teacher was the sun. It is bright. The *Sādhaka* should shine with the lustre of the Self. The sun radiates light and heat. The *Sādhaka* should spread all around him the illumination of the Self, and give comfort and spiritual solace to the people who come to him. The jaundiced eye sees the sun to be yellow; others see it white or blue. It is not tainted by other people's diseases of the eye. Similarly, the Self remains the same in all states and conditions. It is not tainted by various concepts and ideas that different people form about it.

(7) His seventh teacher was the moon. It is cool, bright, charming. The spiritual seeker should give peace and comfort to all who go to him. He should be polite and charming in his behaviour. The moon borrows the light of the sun, but in the transitional process makes it cool and soothing. Similarly, the *Sādhaka* himself performs austerities, penances and other purificatory rites; but he gives peace and spiritual solace to all, who go to him. He converts the heat of the *Tapasyā* into the peace of the soul. Such is his benevolence.

(8) His eighth teacher was a dove. A poor, pitiable dove had built a nest in the midst of the branches of a tree in a forest. His mate, she-dove, and her fledgelings were dwelling in it. Once he flew out to gather in his beak some grains of corn for his offspring. The she-dove also did the same, but at a nearer distance. In the meanwhile a fowler came with his net, and spread it near the tree, putting some

grains of rice beneath the net. The young of the dove were hungry. They were tempted. They flew down to eat rice, and were caught in the net. After some time the she-dove came with some grains in her beak. She found some of her young screaming and yelling, and some dead in the meshes of the net. She could not bear the sight. She did not like to live. She fell on the net and was caught in its foils. In the meanwhile the dove came with grains of corn in his beak. He wanted to feed his wife and children with those grains. But he found, to his utter disgust and grief, that his entire family was caught in the fowler's net, yelling, screaming, dead or half dead. What use for life had he now? He loathed it. His attachment to his wife and children was so great. He fell on the net and was caught in it. Instead of trying to find out a way of freeing his family from the net, he became blind with grief and fell a prey to the fowler's wiles. The fowler was glad. He had got a great mass of meat, which would fetch him a large sum of money from prospective customers.

Such is the story of a worldly man with family. He earns for his wife and children. Attachment makes him blind. Death, the great Fowler, spreads his net, and his wife and children are caught in it. On return he finds the sorry plight of his family. He does not think of finding out ways and means to make them free. Instead he falls into the snare of death and brings his own ruin. Such is the pitiable condition of an ignorant householder.

Learning from this, a *Sādhaka* should never be attached to any person, and should never think of setting up a home.

(9) A python was his ninth teacher. He never goes out in search of his food. He sits under a tree in the forest in a majestic pose, and fills his belly with whatever Providence sends to him and which falls into his mouth—be it a lamb, a deer or a goat. Then he winds himself round the trunk

of the tree, and his prey breaks into pieces in his belly. He pulls on with its meat for days together but never stirs out in search of another prey, till Providence sends him another prey to eat. The *Sādhaka*, similarly, has supreme unshakable faith in Providence, and lives contentedly on whatever food and clothing He gives. He makes no effort to earn worldly gains and acquire objects of pleasure. He spends all his time and energy only in fixing his mind on the Self. Without contentment and faith in Providence a *Sādhaka* cannot make much progress in his *Sādhana*.

(10) The ocean was his tenth teacher. It is unfathomable. The depths of the inner being of a *Sādhaka* should similarly be unfathomable. The ocean has pearls within it. The *Sādhaka* likewise should have very many precious spiritual realizations within him. The ocean is serene and grand. The *Sādhaka* should similarly be serene and grand in his spiritual depths. Rivers bring their watery contributions in myriads of tons of water to the mighty ocean, and still it remains unruffled. It is not puffed up. It does not overflow. It never transgresses its bounds. Similarly, the *Sādhaka* assimilates and digests within himself all the spiritual realizations. He never gets puffed up, upset. He never crosses the boundary line of proper behaviour.

(11) A moth was his eleventh teacher. It falls into the flame of a lamp and gets burnt. That is the attraction of beautiful form, attended by its dire consequences. A *Sādhaka*, therefore, should not fall a prey to the attraction of beautiful forms. He should control his mind, going out through the eye to embrace beautiful forms; otherwise he will get complete spiritual ruination.

(12) A Beetle was his twelfth teacher. It is able to penetrate a great beam, and cut a hole in it. But it gets imprisoned in the petals of a lotus, because it is enamoured of its fragrance. That is the result of his not being able to

control his senses of smell. He can, but does not pierce through the soft delicate petals of a lotus. The reason is his attachment to, fondness for fragrant smells. So a *Sādhaka* should beware of the attractions of sweet pleasant smells. Otherwise it will spell his utter spiritual ruination.

(To be continued)



A king may fall asleep and find himself a beggar; he may dream that he is a beggar, but that can in no way interfere with his real sovereignty.

O King of kings, my dear Self in all these bodies, absolute monarch, quintessence of blessing, O dear one, make not a slave of yourself in the dream of ignorance. Arise and rule in your Supreme Majesty, ye are God, ye could be nothing else. With full force from within, casting away all hesitation, feebleness and weakness, jump right into the pure "I am" or Self. Ye are God; He and I are one. What a balmy thought, what a blessed idea. It takes away all misery and unloads all our burdens. Wander not outside yourself. Keep your own centre. Archimedes said, "If I can find a fixed fulcrum, a standpoint, I can move the world." But he could not find the fixed point, poor fellow. The fixed point is within you. It is your Self. Get hold of it and the whole Universe is moved by you.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

Do not withhold your compassion from those who ask for it; does not the holy moon shine equally on the leper and on the Lord?

—Hitopadesa

Jñāneśwara

He is one of the greatest saints of Maharashtra. His famous work *Jñāneśwarī* is a free commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* and is a deservedly famous and popular work.

His father Viṭhobā was the son of Govinda Paṇḍita and Nirupamā Bālī. Viṭhobā married Rukmā Bālī, who was the daughter of Sita Panta, but went to Banaras and became the disciple of Śrīpādaswāmī without revealing the fact of his marriage. Rukmā Bālī went to live with her father and worshipped Gaurī. When Śrīpādaswāmī went to her village, she prostrated at his feet. He blessed her saying: "You will have four children." When he learnt that Viṭhobā was her husband, he became angry at Viṭhobā's conduct. He then brought Viṭhobā with him and commanded him to live as a householder. Three sons, viz., Nivṛttinātha, Jñāneśwara, Sopānadeva and a daughter named Mukṭā Bālī were born to him and Rukmā Bālī. It is said that they were *Amśas* (incarnations) of Śiva and Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śakti.

Viṭhobā, however, did not earn anything but lived in meditation. Rukmā Bālī took her children to her father. She found that her father lived by begging alms. One day Sita Panta and his children went to eat where a feast was going on. The Brahmans who were there drove them away as the boys were the children of a *Saṁnyāsī* who broke the vows of *Saṁnyāsa* and became a householder again. Jñāneśwara was angry and beat them. They complained to the king. Jñāneśwara told him: "My father did so at his

Guru's command. He should not be blamed." The king agreed with that view.

Jñāneśwara then went to his father and argued with him. He said, "You can come back to the life of a householder and yet live in detachment and devotion. Did not Janaka do so?" Viṭhobā came back. But the king asked him to get a ruling from a *Paṇḍita* (scholar) at Paithan. Viṭhobā and Jñāneśwara went to the *Paṇḍita*. The *Paṇḍita* regarded Viṭhobā as an apostate. A buffalo came there. Jñāneśwara said to the *Paṇḍita*: "You have not got a fraction of the learning of this buffalo." The *Paṇḍita* became angry. Jñāneśwara questioned the buffalo: "Is a man a Brahman by birth or by learning and experience of God?" The buffalo recited all the *Vedas* and gave four verses in reply approving of his view. The *Paṇḍita* and others wondered at the miracle and accepted Viṭhobā and his sons.

Jñāneśwara wrote also a book of songs called *Haripāṭha* and a Vedantic work called *Amṛtānubhava*.

He finally attained God. His image was installed at a temple. It is next to the temple of Pāṇḍuraṅga.



My old master used to say, "When the lotus of the heart has bloomed, the bees will come by themselves." Men like that are there yet. They need not talk.....When the man is perfect from his heart, without a thought of hatred, all animals will give up their hatred (before him). So with purity. These are necessary for our dealings with our fellow beings. We must love all..... We have no business to look at the faults of others: it does no good. We must not even think of them. Our business is with the good. We are not here to deal with faults. Our business is to be good.

—Swami Vivekananda

Ponder

—*Dr. R. D. Srivastava*

Under blue vault of heavens,
Myriad of mysteries parade,
We men of puny intellect
Try to fathom Lord's mysterious ways,
A poet of past called man—paragon of animals,
That's true, but only few,
Rise above the dross which animals crave.
In eating, drinking and lovemaking,
The majority spend their days,
And frown and censure those,
Whose vision transcends mundane.
Once on cross a messiah was nailed,
And, to drink hemlock paragon philosopher was made,
Thus any critical mind can envisage,
That—it's absurd and irrelevant,
To bother much for opinions and rage,
Of imbeciles, clowns and knaves,
Who gloat on their pomp and wealth,
And consider eccentric all the rest,
Man was not evolved,
Simply to animals imitate,
But to rise above the clod,
And soar in spirit's domain.

Few blessed whose intellect is refined,
And spirit some perfection gained,
On them only the esoteric wisdom,
Lord mercifully vouchsafe.
In life they be shunned and abhorred,
But their gospels the scriptures proclaim;
Tell me! which universal monarch could ever sway,
More masses to tread his—rather Buddha's way.



Environment according to Vedas

—M. Sankarasubramanian

Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, fourth *Aṣṭaka*, second *Prapāṭhaka*, sixth *Anuvāka* is *Oṣadhi Sūkta*. These *Mantras* show that the ancient Indians not only considered plant life as integral part of this universe but also had high veneration for these sub-human life (Plants and Animals). Any injury caused to plants were also considered as *Himsā*. Some of the *Mantras* while they have their poetic charm and beauty have an indepth meaning. The word "*Oṣadhi*" although considered to mean medicinal plants and herbs, in Vedic Sanskrit literature this term is used to indicate plants in general. These *Mantras* are used in "*Yajñas*" (sacrifice) and also in the *Abhyudaya Karmas* (*Smārta Karmas* for householders). Sāyaṇa Ācārya has written commentary to the *Veda Saṁhitās*. The meaning of these *Mantras* as per Sāyaṇa are discussed bellow:—

Plants which are the support of human life in this universe, are gift of Gods; dark green in colour and grow normally in three seasons, Spring, Rainy season and *Śarad*. There are hundreds of species (many species) of plants of which seven major plant species belong to forest and seven belong to human surroundings.

Oh! plants, you are like mother to me. You have a hundred species among you. Quench my hunger and kill all my diseases and make me healthy. (The ancient Indians considered hunger also as a kind of disease of the body. Depletion of energy is hunger and when food is taken

energy increases and hunger abates.)

Among you Oh! plants, there are certain species which bear only flowers, others flowers and fruits, yet others fruits alone and some other species neither flower nor fruits. Some of you are creepers. Oh! mother (Plants) be ye! quick like the horses used in war in the matter of fighting the disease and hunger and make me healthy.

The Sanskrit word *Oṣadhi* means that a substance in which energy is inbuilt (potential energy). True to your name supply me the required energy and make me healthy and free from disease and sorrow arising out of it.

You are helping me by providing food and energy. I offer salutations to you and bow down before you as token of gratitude.

When a hunter goes for hunting rabbits, they run fast and try to escape. But as soon as the rabbit is cornered and about to be caught, as a final resort it lies motionless like a dead one closing its eyes and ears with hand. So too the moment I take you (plant) in my hand, out of fear for you, all my diseases feel they have no escape and become motionless like the rabbit.

Oh! plants, pray, you all go together, supporting each other (like a king who goes with his body-guards and army chiefs around him as his aide-de-camp) and conquer the disease.

You all be friendly and protect each other. Be supplementary to each others function. Let there not be a negative influence.

Your inbuilt strength which lies deep within you to cure disease or to provide energy to the hungry get manifested as soon as you are consumed by a person.

Though you only enter into the stomach of a person who eats you in the form of food you search for diseases hiding in the different parts of the body and cure him of

the disease. (This is explained by a highly imaginative analogy). A thief entering in a house through some opening, lands at a particular portion of the house. But then he searches where the loot lies and grab them. So too you enter into the body through mouth and reach stomach and cure the disease wherever it be.

Like a king who is impartial in doing justice by punishing those who are guilty and let go free the innocent; you act on those who are causing disease and leave others. Let there not be any negative activity.

Keep all the ingredients of my body the *Vāta* (wind), *Pitta* (bile) and *Kapha* (phlegm) in their right proportion so that I am free from illness.

Oh! plants, if I have rich growth it is a sign of my wealth. It is a sign of my well being. So let me have good plants. Your richness is indicative of plentitude and energy. Ye! plants, for treatment of disease and for treatment of hunger i.e., as food, I have to cut you. Kindly do not become extinct on the fear that I am your enemy. Do not think me of being cruel. I do this pruning with a good intention to save a fellow being who is sick. We are all integral parts of this universe. Let there be harmony in us. Let all be free from disease. Let us prosper together.

Having heard these *Mantras* the plants say to their king the "Soma" (Moon); the Brahmins sow the seeds in the plough channel saying these *Mantras*. They pray to us for mutual protection and growth for all. As they have sown the seeds with these prayers for mutual co-operation and for the well being of all, we shall provide them rich harvest of food material and save them from disease.



Story

Samyama

"Oh my God! What happened to you?" I felt ashamed that I could not recognise the person who was my neighbour for two full years. I could recall him only when he wrote his name on the ground. He was so different from his usual self. And when I knew him I was startled.

He made a gesture of dismay by striking his forehead with his right hand as if he wanted to communicate that it was all for a stroke of ill luck.

He was silent. I took him to my chamber and drew a chair for him to sit in, but he refused it and gestured that he would sit only on the ground. I then brought a mat and we both sat down. After a short while I came to know that he does not only not sit in chair but the list of inhibitions is pretty long. He does not take any spice or even salt in his food. Even milk or any of the milk-product also he does not take. Unbuttered chapatis, saltless pulses and only boiled vegetables constitute his meals. He has taken a vow for keeping *Mauna* (silent). I had to make special arrangement for him and I did it.

Formerly he was a wrestler and used to train the local youth in wrestling. Like other wrestlers he also cherished very much the milk and its byproducts. He used to wear a thin white *Kurtā* which made him look a grand personality. But looking grey with dust was a routine affair. He was gentle and social also and commanded respect from all alike.

God knows what happened. One morning he was

reported to have disappeared and after complete two years; He is seen today—that too in an unimaginable condition. The body dry, lean and thin, matted locks on the head, heels full of cracks, a dirty loin-cloth around waist, a satchel bag hanging from the shoulder, a big water jug in the hand and a stick, a *Tilaka* of Rāmānanda cult on the forehead. This *Vaiṣṇavite* monk, sitting before me, was once the well respected *Ustādaī* of the town. Perhaps his disciples even will not recognise him in his present condition.

Alone he was in the world. Mother expired one year before he got initiated as a *Vaiṣṇava*. So when he suddenly disappeared, nobody took any particular notice. Dispassion or repugnance, whatever it was, was very sharp. He did not even care to close the doors of his house and lock it. It was just wide open. For sometime roaming animals inhabited it. Then gradually his so-called belongings went on thinning and one day a bold disciple of his, occupied his ancestral home by force and nobody lodged any protest even.

His journey on the path of asceticism was very unenviable and thorny, so to speak. I supplied a slate and a pencil to him and he gave an account of his life routine after initiation. It was something like this—

"There was a great dispassion from the world in my mind and still greater was admiration and fascination towards the monks. After a very few days of initiation, I had to go alongwith the party on entourage. The result was that I was deeply coloured by the society and got spoiled."

"But I see that your austerity is very advanced and strong" said I.

"What you see is just expiatory measure to what I did in the company of the so-called *Sādhus*. Whole day smoking hemp through clay pipe was routine affair. Use of filthy abusive language until we went to bed. *Bhajana*, *Pūjā* was not our concern. Everybody was in search of a chance for

his amorous dilly-dallying. Oh God, they were all wolves in the guise of lambs."

"Did you tolerate all this" I asked, I knew that *Ustādajī* never tolerated even a slip towards misconduct on the part of his disciples. He was known for his gentlemanliness and good behaviour.

"I not only tolerated but did it myself. In their company also I never missed my physical exercises. I was a wrestler and I was strong. So none of them dared to indulge with me physically otherwise pushing and jostling was a day to day business. As a matter of truth we did not have a thing to engage our mind or even body. So only rotten things attracted our attention and fascination."

"But now you are an ideal monk" I was curious to know how this change took place.

"There always are some real saints among the disguised wolves. Had they not been there, the entire show must have finished long long ago. It is due to glory of those exalted souls that the fakes also are respected and adored. The entire rot of the mines is carefully preserved just for a few pieces of real gems. And it is not a bad bargain."

I kept quite as it was clear that he also happened to find some real gem. It is said that *Sparśa Maṇi* transforms iron into gold by mere touch. It may or may not be correct. But the great souled ones are that kind of *Sparśa Maṇi* which convert iron into *Sparśa Maṇi* itself by a simple touch.

"We also had an old *Mahātmā* in our party. We all respected him but kept ourselves at an arm's length. One day he called me and gave me *Tulasī Dala* with great affection. He said—

"Have you accepted monkhood to do what you are doing? You could do all this at a larger scale in your household life. This body will one day be eaten by worms or animals or birds. Adore Śrī Rāma when you have abandoned your previous life."

"That old *Mahātmā* did not have any time to spare from his *Japa* and recitation. It was very kind of him to spare even these few moments. He did not tell me to do this thing or not to do that thing." That momentary company, that shortest instruction did the thing and *Ustādaḥ* was now a transformed person; became a real monk.

"I abandoned the party that very day. Nobody gave me any guidance. So what I thought proper, did it regularly. Now what I do, I do. I mutter *Rāma Rāma* day and night till I am awake."

"This is no *Sāṇiyama* (restraint). It is only reaction to *Asāṇiyama* (want of restraint)." I took liberty with him as I felt a little free during the past few hours.

"Then what is *Sāṇiyama*" he wrote on the slate. There was a strange eagerness in his eyes. "Now you yourself tell me. You are a well-read man and I am illiterate. You know it."

"The reaction of too much speaking and speaking unspeakable things, is complete *Mauna*. The unrestrained tongue reacted in eating tasteless food even without salt. But Lord Buddha advised to avoid both the extremities. *Gītā* also proclaims 'युक्ताहारविहारस्य'.

"The restraint of speech means speaking truth that too very little; only that which is indispensable. The restraint over tongue is to eat only *Sāttvika* food in right proportion. You are a *Sādhu*; so it is needless to talk of other types of संयमः. They are innate with you."

"What are the other *Sāṇiyamas*" he asked.

"The eyes must not look at anybody with a sense of anger, contempt, or lust and at the same time they must not be closed. They should see the images of God, saintly persons and may see others also but only with affection, compassion and piety. Ears should not hear scandalous talks. They may hear divine discourses. Similar must be the case with all sensory or motor organs."

"Let my snobbery end here in your presence" he now spoke for the first time.

"Why do you call it snobbery and make me feel ashamed? It was my luck that I become a cause in ending your severe penance. Now if you so permit, a little salt may be added to *Naivedya* which is being cooked and cow ghee will add only sanctity to it."

"My Raghunāthajī has sent me to you. Do what you think proper but don't commit the sin of making me tongue-greedy."



Political freedom cannot root out the miseries of the world. You can have a little more comfort through political freedom, but bread, butter, jam and nice biscuits cannot give you everlasting peace. Comforts are enemies of spiritual life and peace. They pull a man down. After all, man wants very little on this earth. You will think of God only when you are in adversities. What is wanted is spiritual wealth which is inexhaustible.

—Swami Sivananda

हिरण्यमे परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम्।
तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः॥

"In the supreme, bright sheath is *Brahman*, free from taints and without parts. It is pure, and is the Light of lights. It is that which the knowers of the Self realize."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 2. 9)

Just as you think so you become, and if you have felt and realized your self as God, all your thoughts and desires are bound to fructify, to be realized on the spot.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

He has an Axe to Grind

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

Benjamin Franklin in his autobiography relates an experience of his boyhood. When he was a boy, he was going to school in Philadelphia and one day on his way to school he happened to see a blacksmith at work. In those days, the machinery was not in such a high state of development as it is today. The blacksmith was working in his shop. Just like a curious boy, Benjamin stopped at the shop and was looking at the man at work. Children lose themselves in any thought that comes up before them. He had a satchel in his hand and he was just going to school, but he forgot all about his school to enjoy the sight of the working blacksmith. The blacksmith noticed the interest of the boy. He was sharpening his tools and knives. The assistant of the blacksmith having gone on an errand, was absent. On seeing the little boy taking so much interest in the work, he asked him to come upto him. Benjamin moved up and the blacksmith said, "What a nice boy, a fine boy, how intelligent you are!" Benjamin was puffed up and felt flattered and when he noticed the beaming smiles on the face of Benjamin, he asked him if he would take the trouble to help him in turning the grindstone. Benjamin immediately began to do that work. Children are naturally very active and they want to do-something which will keep their muscles employed. You can send them to the other end of the world if you can tickle their humour. While Benjamin was working at the grindstone, the blacksmith went on

humouring and flattering him. The boy went on doing the work. In the meantime, he whetted a number of knives and axes. By that time the little boy felt fatigued and he remembered his school time and recitation hours and wanted to leave the shop. But there was that man upon him with his flattery and humouring spirit saying, "Oh good boy, I know you are never punished in school, you are so fine, so smart. What the other boys take three hours to accomplish, you can do in one hour. The school master never gets angry with you, you are so good." One by one the swords were whetted and when one was half done, Benjamin wanted to leave, but he could not. The recitation hours commenced at 10 and he was released at 12. He went to school and was flogged for being late. He was tired and his arms were sore. For a week he had to suffer the consequences. He could not prepare his lessons. Ever afterwards when anyone flattered him, the thought came to his mind, "He has an axe to grind." After this event never was Benjamin Franklin entrapped in the snares of flattery.

Om! Om! Om!



यदर्चिमद्यदणुभ्योऽणु च यस्मिँल्लोका निहिता लोकिनश्च ।
तदेतदक्षरं ब्रह्म स प्राणस्तदु वाङ्मनः तदेतत्सत्यं तदमृतं तद्वेद्म्यं सोम्य विद्धि ॥

"That which is bright and is subtler than the subtle and that on which are fixed all the worlds as well as the dwellers of the worlds, is this immutable *Brahman*; It is this vital force; It, again, is speech and mind. This Entity, that is such, is true. It is immortal. It is to be penetrated. O good-looking one, shoot (at It)."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 2. 2)

Vāsudevaḥ Sarvam

Whatever objects of the world you see, tree or stone, man, beast or bird, persuade yourself to believe that God Himself has assumed all these forms. Then ask the mind to go wherever it pleases, all the forms of the world being nothing but representations of God Himself. All that you see is a manifestation of *Nārāyaṇa*, the *Paramātmā* (oversoul). Mentally bow to every object of the world that comes before your eyes, believing that God Himself has appeared before you in that form. This practice of seeing infinite forms of the world as only so many manifestations of the same God may also lead to God-realization. Thousands of such methods have been suggested in the scriptures, out of which the practicant has to select and adopt that which appears easy to him. The adoption and practice of anyone of these methods may lead to final beatitude. Knowing that all that exists, is God, one will begin to look upon everything with an equal eye. This one simple practice, if diligently pursued, may bring him salvation.

—Jayadayal Goyandka

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Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa of Śrī Vedavyāsa

(Sanskrit text with English Translation)

We feel happy to inform our readers and through them, all English knowing spiritual minded persons that we are publishing *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (Sanskrit text with English translation) as the Special Number of the Kalyana-Kalpataru 1998, our English monthly journal published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur. We have taken special care to do the editing very minutely and translating very faithfully.

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